Islamic Online Madrasah - IOM

Bachelor in Dawah and Islamic Studies

Research Topic:

Praying while sitting on a chair

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Date: 30 November 2024

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This is an ancillary research paper of the Department of Dawah and Islamic studies.

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TESTIMONIAL

This is to certify that the research paper named "**Praying while sitting on a chair**" has been written with excellence under the supervision of myself by **Fahmida Rahman**, **ID: 227020338**, from the Department of Dawah and Islamic Studies, Islamic Online Madrasah.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I declare that this research paper, "**Praying while sitting on a chair**" has been written by myself under Ustadh Mufti Jubayer Hasan, Department of Dawah and Islamic Studies, Islamic Online Madrasah. Any part of this paper is not meant to be used by any institution for any other degree or diploma.

I also declare that. This research paper is my creation. According to my knowledge, research papers with this title have yet to be submitted.

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Date: 30 November 2024

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Table of Content

1.0. Importance of Prayer in Islam 1
1.1. The Five Daily Prayers 5
1.2. Pillars of a Prayer 7
2.0. Islamic guidelines on praying while sitting 8
2.1. Is there any difference between praying Fard and Nafl while sitting? 9
2.2. Sitting on the ground vs chairs 16
3.0. How to pray sitting in a chair 17
3.1. Where to put the chair? 20
3.2. Type of chair to use 21
4.0. Conclusion 22
Reference List 23

1.0. Importance of Prayer in Islam

The significance of prayer in Islam cannot be stressed enough.

It is the second pillar of Islam and the first thing the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned after mentioning the testimony of faith, by which a person becomes Muslim.

Prayer was made obligatory upon all the prophets and for all peoples.

وَاَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوْحٰى ﴿١٣﴾
اِنَّنِيْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِيْ ۙ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِذِكْرِيْ ﴿١٤﴾

Allah spoke directly to Moses, He said, **"And I have chosen you, so listen to that which is inspired to you. Verily, I am Allah! There is none worthy of worship but I, so worship Me and offer prayer perfectly for My remembrance." [Taha 13-14] [1]**

Similarly, the prayers were made obligatory upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) during Isra al Miraj. Furthermore, Allah praises the believers at the beginning of the Surah al Muminun; one of His first descriptions is their adherence to the prayers.

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۙ﴿۱﴾ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ ۙ﴿۲﴾

Successful indeed are the believers.
Those who offer their Salât (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness. [Al Muminun 1-2]

The importance of prayer has been highlighted many times by the Prophet (SM) in his statements as follows:

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon ,) said,
"The first matter that the slave will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is the prayer. If it is sound, then the rest of his deeds will be sound. And if it is bad, then the rest of his deeds will be bad." [Recorded by al-Tabarani. According to al-Albani, it is sahih. Al-Albani, (Sahih al-Jami', vol.1, p. 503)

One of the most important aspects of life is a person's relationship with Allah, which is demonstrated and put into practice by the person's prayer.

Huraith bin Qabisah narrated:
"I arrived in Al-Madinah and said: 'O Allah! Facilitate me to be in a righteous gathering.'" He said: "I sat with Abu Hurairah and said: 'Indeed I asked Allah to provide me with a righteous gathering. So narrate a hadith to me which you heard from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) so that perhaps Allah would cause me to benefit from it.' He said: 'I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say: "Indeed the first deed by which

a servant will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection is his Salat. If it is complete, he is successful and saved, but if it is defective, he has failed and lost. So if something is deficient in his obligatory (prayers) then the Lord, Mighty and Sublime says: 'Look! Are there any voluntary (prayers) for my worshipper?' So with them, what was deficient in his obligatory (prayers) will be completed. Then the rest of his deeds will be treated like that."
[Reference: Jami` at-Tirmidhi 413]

Another aspect of prayer is increasing a person's taqwa to enable him to fight evil and temptations and remain steadfast in times of trials and tribulations. Allah has mentioned this aspect of the prayer when He has said,

اُتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ ۭاِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاۗءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۭوَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ ۭوَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ ۝۴۵

Recite, [O Muḥammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allāh is greater. And Allāh knows that which you do.
[Al-Ankabut 45]

The final effect of one's prayer should have on the person is described in the following verses

إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ﴿١٩﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ
جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Indeed, humankind was created impatient: distressed when touched with evil, and withholding when touched with good—except those who pray, [Al-Ma'arij 19-22]

The prayer for humans is a kind of purification. Standing in front of Allah five times a day with humility should keep the person away from sins. It also allows connecting with Allah and repenting for any shortcomings. In addition, prayer in itself is a deed that wipes away sin.

The Prophet (peace be upon him):
"If a person had a stream outside his door and he bathed in it five times a day, do you think he would have any filth left on him?" The people said, "No filth would remain on him whatsoever." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then said, "That is like the five daily prayers: Allah wipes away the sins by them."
(Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

In another hadith, the **Prophet (peace be upon him) said,**
"The five daily prayers and the Friday Prayer until the Friday prayer are expiation for what is between them." (Recorded by Muslim)

1.1. The Five Daily Prayers

Allah on the night of the Mi'raj when our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was taken up into heaven – enjoined fifty prayers to be performed night and day.

Then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) kept asking his Lord to reduce it until it became five prayers to be offered night and day.

But Allah decreed the reward of fifty prayers for these five, so whoever prays five prayers will receive the reward of fifty prayers.

Anas ibn Maalik (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Abu Dharr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The roof of my house was split open when I was in Makkah, and Jibril (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came down and split open my chest and washed it with Zamzam water. Then he brought a golden vessel filled with wisdom and faith and poured it into my chest, then he sealed it. Then he took me by the hand and ascended with me into the lowest heaven. When I reached the lowest heaven Jibril said to the gatekeeper, 'Open up!' He said, 'Who is this?' He said, 'Jibril.' He said, 'Is there anyone with you?' He said, 'Yes, Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is with me.' He said, 'Has his mission begun?' He said, 'Yes.' And when it was opened we went up into the lowest heaven... Then Allah enjoined upon my Ummah fifty prayers, and I came back until I passed by Musa who said, 'What has Allah enjoined

upon your Ummah?' I said, 'He has enjoined fifty prayers.' He said, 'Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear that.' So I went back and He reduced it. Then I came back to Musa and said, 'He has reduced it.' He said, 'Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear that.' So I went back and He reduced it further. Then I came back to Musa and said, 'He has reduced it further.' He said, 'Go back to your Lord, for your Ummah will not be able to bear that.' So I went back and He said, '(The prayers) are five but (the reward) is fifty. The Sentence that comes from Me cannot be changed [Quran 50:29].' Then I went back to Musa and he said, 'Go back to your Lord.' But I said, 'I feel shy before my Lord.'..." (Narrated by Al-Bukhaari, 342 and Muslim, 163)

Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "What is meant is that they are five with regard to what is to be done, but they are fifty with regard to the reward ." (Fath Al-Bari, 1/463) [1]

1.2. Pillars of a Prayer

There are **14 pillars of prayer** and there are 8 obligatory parts of prayer. There are many Sunnah acts of prayer, both words and actions.

The difference between a pillar and an obligatory part is that a pillar cannot be waived, whether one omits it deliberately or by mistake, rather it must be done.

An obligatory part is waived if one forgets, and it can be compensated for by doing the prostration of forgetfulness (sujud as-sahw).
[2]

Standing, bowing and prostrating are pillars or essential parts of the prayer. Whoever can do them, must do them in the manner prescribed in the Shari`ah.

حٰفِظُوْا عَلَى الصَّلَوٰتِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ الْوُسْطٰىۗ وَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قٰنِتِيْنَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

“Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawat (the prayers) especially the middle Salah (i.e. the best prayer - ‘Asr). And stand before Allah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salah (prayers)]” [al-Baqarah 238]

2.0. Islamic guidelines on praying while sitting

Prayer has its required conditions, elements, obligations, and recommended manners. Some things are meant to be done standing while others are done while sitting or in prostration.

Takbeerah, reading surah Al-Fatiha and another surah is done standing. Then we have bowing when a person bends over until his hands reach his knees and recites "Glorified be Allah, the Great One." Tashahud, prostration, and tasleem are done while in a sitting position.

Standing being a pillar is one of the core parts of the prayer. If a person doesn't stand without any valid excuse during the prayer, his prayer is invalid.

Allah says in the Quran about standing in Surah Baqarah,
"And stand before Allaah with obedience" [al-Baqarah 2:238].

A Muslim is to pray to the best of his ability, the best he can, due to the report narrated by Al-Bukhari (1050) from **`Imran ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I had haemorrhoids, and I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) about praying. He said: "Pray standing; if you cannot, then sitting; and if you cannot, then lying on your side."**

The ruling of standing being a key part of the prayer applies to the fard prayer. It is not obligatory to stand in the nafl prayers.

2.1. Is there any difference between praying Fard and Nafl while sitting?

When it comes to praying while sitting, there is a difference in the rulings between nafl and fard prayers.

The primary difference between **Fard (obligatory)** and **Nafl (voluntary)** prayers lies in their obligation and flexibility.

Fard prayers, such as the five daily prayers, are mandatory as commanded in the Qur'an and emphasized in Hadith; missing them without valid reason is sinful.

Nafl prayers, on the other hand, are optional and performed for additional rewards.

2.1.1. Permissibility of sitting during nafl prayer

Sitting is permitted during nafl prayer but the reward will be half the one who stands.

Salim b. 'Abdullah reported on the authority of his father that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be. upon him) used to observe Nafl (supererogatory) prayer on his ride no matter in what direction it turned its face, and he observed Witr too on it, but did not observe obligatory prayer on it. [Muslim 700]

'Abdullah b. 'Amr reported:

It was narrated to me that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had said: The prayer observed by a person sitting is half of the prayer. I came to him (ﷺ) and found him praying in a sitting position. I placed my hand on his head. He said: O 'Abdullah b. 'Amr, what is the matter with you? I said: Messenger of Allah, it has been narrated to me that you said: The prayer of a man in a sitting position is half of the prayer, whereas you are observing prayer sitting. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Yes, it is so, but I am not like anyone amongst you.
[Reference : Sahih Muslim 735b
In-book reference: Book 6, Hadith 146]

Al-Nawawi said, commenting on this hadeeth: this hadeeth is to be understood as meaning that a naafil prayer done sitting down when one is able to stand will bring half of the reward of one who prays standing. But if a person prays a naafil prayer sitting down because he is unable to stand, his reward will not be reduced, and he will have the same reward as one who prays standing. With regard to Fard prayers, if a person prays sitting down when he is able to stand, his prayer will not be valid and he will not get any reward for it, in fact this is counted as a sin. (Sharh Muslim. 6/258)[3]

2.1.2. Permissibility of sitting during Fard prayer

It is only permissible to pray while sitting during fard prayer only if there is **difficulty**. The permissibility of sitting if there is difficulty can be understood from the hadith:

It was narrated that Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I had haemorrhoids so I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)
about praying. He said: "Pray standing up; if you cannot, then pray sitting down; and if you cannot, then pray (lying) on your side." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1066.

Imam Al Shawkani said about this hadith

The hadeeth of 'Imraan indicates that it is permissible for one who has an excuse and cannot stand to pray sitting, and for one who has an excuse and cannot pray sitting to pray lying on his side. [Nayl al-Awtaar, 3/243]

Furthermore, Imam Al Nawawi said

The ummah is unanimously agreed that whoever is unable to stand during the obligatory prayer may pray sitting, and he does not have to repeat it. Our companions said: his reward will not be less than the reward for praying standing, because he is excused. It is proven in Saheeh al-Bukhaari that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If a person is sick or travelling, the same reward will be written for him with regard to what he used to do when he was not travelling and was healthy." [Al-Majmoo', 4/226]

2.1.3. Difficulties that make it permissible to pray sitting down

The guidelines that allow one not to stand and pray obligatory prayer sitting are as follows:

1. He is unable to stand
2. Standing will make his sickness worse
3. It will delay his recovery
4. It will cause a great difficult of such scale that he will not be able to concentrate properly. If the difficulty is less than that then it's not permissible.

To explain the difficulty the scholars used the hadith of Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him):

Al-Bukhaari (1117) narrated that,Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I had haemorrhoids and I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about praying. He said: "Pray standing, and if you cannot then sitting, and if you cannot, then lying on your side." [4]

Al-Hafidh (may Allah have mercy on him) said:
"The words "If you cannot" were quoted as evidence by those who say that a sick person should not start to sit whilst praying until after he becomes unable to stand. This was narrated by `Iyad from Ash-Shafi`i. It was narrated from Malik, Ahmad and Is-Haq that it is not essential that a person be unable to stand, rather if it is very difficult for him to stand (then he may sit).

The well-known view among the Shafi`is is that what is meant by not being able is that it is very difficult to stand, or there is the

fear that the sickness may be made worse or it may lead to the death of the patient. Slight difficulty is not sufficient (as an excuse). Another example of great hardship is dizziness in the case of a passenger on a boat who fears that he may drown if he prays standing in the boat.

The majority also quote as evidence the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas which was narrated by At-Tabarani (may Allah have mercy on him): “He should pray standing, but if he encounters difficulty then sitting, and if he encounters difficulty, then lying down.”” (Fat-h Al-Bari)

The Hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) which was mentioned by Al-Hafidh was also quoted by Al-Haythami in Majma` Al-Zawa’id, 2897, where he says:

“This was narrated by At-Tabarani in Al-Awsat. He said: It was not narrated from Ibn Jurayj except by Halas ibn Muhammad Al-Dab’i. I (Al-Haythami) say: I cannot find anyone who wrote his biography, but the rest of the men in its chain of narrators are trustworthy.”

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Mughni, 1/443:

“If he is able to stand (he should do so), otherwise if he fears that his sickness will become worse or his recovery will be slowed or it is extremely difficult for him to stand, then he may pray sitting down. Something similar was said by Malik and Ishaq... because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship” [Al-Hajj 22:78]

The obligation of standing in this case is a hardship.

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed sitting down when he was wounded in his right cheek; it seems that he was not completely unable to stand, but because it was difficult for him to stand, he was excused.”

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Majmu`, 4/201:

“Our companions said: Being unable does not necessarily mean that one cannot stand and slight difficulty is not enough reason for not standing; rather what counts is obvious difficulty. If a person fears immense hardship or worsening of the sickness etc., or if a passenger in a boat fears that he may drown or become dizzy, he may pray sitting down, and he does not have to repeat the prayer. Imam Al-Haramayn said: What I think with regard to the guidelines on what constitutes an inability to stand is that standing would cause hardship that would prevent him from focusing properly, because proper focus is the purpose of prayer.”

The view favoured by Imam Al-Haramayn (may Allah have mercy on him) is the view which Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) thought most likely to be correct. He said:

“The guideline on what constitutes hardship is that which prevents one from focusing properly. Proper focus means having presence of mind and being at ease. If standing will cause intense anxiety which

makes one ill at ease and makes him wish to reach the end of Al-Fatihah quickly so that he can bow, because it is too hard to stand, then he may pray sitting down." [Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti', 4/326] [5]

To summarise some of the points from above:

1. It is not permissible to pray Fard sitting if one has no excuse.
2. If there is an excuse which will result in harm to the person then one can pray Fard prayer sitting.
3. The excuse shouldn't be a minor difficulty.
4. For nafl prayer, one is allowed to sit even without excuse but he will have half the reward.

2.2. Sitting on the ground vs chairs

As shown by evidence, sitting is permitted if one has a valid excuse. And it shouldn't be a minor difficulty. The case shouldn't be that the person can do regular work while standing but sits down during prayer.

While sitting down is permissible in case of necessity, it doesn't mean one can abandon prostration. This is because prostration is another pillar of prayer.

It's not easily possible to prostrate on the ground while sitting on a chair. Therefore it's preferable to sit on the ground as opposed to sitting on a chair if one can do so.

Every pillar has its unique case and ruling. If a person is unable to stand, they may still be able to kneel. Similarly, if they can kneel, they may not be able to prostrate.

Therefore, having difficulty performing one pillar does not justify neglecting another.
When choosing between sitting on the ground or a chair, one should sit on the ground as he will be able to prostrate.

3.0. How to pray sitting in a chair

It is important to note that if a person is excused from standing during prayer, his excuse doesn't make it permissible to sit on a chair to and prostrate.

If he is excused from bowing and prostrating in the proper manner, that excuse doesn't make it permissible for him to avoid standing and to sit on a chair instead.

The basic ruling is that with regard to fard duties of prayer whatever a worshiper can do, he is obligated to do it. And whatever he can't do, that is excused.
If a person is unable to stand, it is permissible for them to sit on a chair during the standing period, but they should bow and prostrate properly. However, if they are able to stand but find it difficult to bow and prostrate, they should pray standing and sit on a chair during bowing and prostration. In this case, the prostration should be lowered more than the bowing.
Because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And stand before Allah with obedience" [al-Baqarah 2:238], and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Pray standing." And because standing is one of the pillars (essential parts of prayer) for the one who is able to do it, so he must do it, like the recitation. Being unable to do other things does not mean that this is waived, as is also the case if he is unable to recite." (Al-Mughni, 1/44)

If a person is unable to do that and prays on a chair, there is nothing wrong with that, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوْا وَاَطِيْعُوْا وَاَنْفِقُوْا
خَيْرًا لِّاَنْفُسِكُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾

“So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can” [Al-Taghabun 16]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If I tell you to do a thing, then do as much of it as you can.” Sahih – agreed upon.” (Fatawa Ibn Baz, 12/245, 246)

3.1. Where to put the chair?

With regard to the placement of the chair in the row, the scholars (may Allah have mercy on them) stated that the one who prays sitting down should have his posterior in line with the row when he is sitting, so he should not be in front of the row or behind it at that point, because that is the place in which the body settles. (See Asna al-Matalib, 1/222; Tuhfat al-Muhtaj, 2/157; Sharh Muntaha al-Iradat, 1/279)

It says in al-Mawsu'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (6/21):

"In order for a person's following the imam to be valid, he should not stand in front of the imam according to the majority of jurists (Hanafis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis). How do we know whether he is in front of the imam or not, it is judged by where the heels are. If they are standing level at the heel and the toes of the one who is praying behind the imam turn out to be in front because he has longer feet, that does not matter. About those who are sitting, it is judged by where the posterior is. And with regard to those who are praying on their sides, it is judged by their sides." [6]

If a worshipper is planning to pray on the chair from the start of the prayer until the end, then he should make the sitting position level with the row.
But if the worshipper plans to pray standing and sit for bowing and prostation then he should level with the row when standing. It will cause the chair to be behind the row, so it is advised to place the

chair in a way that it doesn't disturb the believers in the row behind. Alternatively, it's better to use smaller chairs that don't take up too much space.

3.2. Type of chair to use

When selecting a chair, the worshipper should avoid choosing a full-sized chair, as it may take up too much space and cause inconvenience to other worshippers. It is better to use a chair that occupies no more space than the worshipper's own body.

3.3. Performing Rukoo and Sujood While Sitting

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Put your forehead on the ground if you can, otherwise use nods or gestures, and make your sujood lower than your rukoo'."

Shaykh al-Albaani said: that this was narrated by al-Tabaraani, al-Bazzaar, Ibn al-Sammaak in his hadeeth (67/2) and al-Bayhaqi. Its isnaad is saheeh as I explained in al-Saheehah (323). Sifat Salaat al-Nabi (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), p. 79.

Ibn Qudaamah said in the text of al-'Umdah: "If a person is unable to do rukoo' or sujood, he should indicate them by nods or gestures."

4.0. Conclusion

The conclusion we can draw from the thesis is that multiple cases come into play when choosing to sit on a chair during prayer. As standing is one of the pillars of Islam, therefore sitting is only acceptable if there is difficulty. And the difficulty itself has its condition.

But it is better to sit on the ground if it's possible to do so because there are other pillars of Islam (bowing and prostration) that can't be done properly while sitting on a chair.

As muslims we should do our best to carry out each of our duty in the best of manners within our capacity. And we are exempted if there is a genuine reason.

فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَاسْمَعُوْا وَاَطِيْعُوْا وَاَنْفِقُوْا
خَيْرًا لِّاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُّوْقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهٖ فَاُولٰۤىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾

So fear Allāh as much as you are able and listen and obey and spend [in the way of Allāh]; it is better for your selves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be successful.
[At-Taghabun 16]

Reference List

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